**William Barret Travis, Letter from the Commandancy of the Alamo (February 24, 1836)**

*William Barret Travis and almost 200 defenders found themselves surrounded at the Alamo Mission in San Antonio, Texas in late February 1836. Refusing to surrender, they held off the invading armies of Mexican dictator Antonio Lopez de* [*Santa Anna*](http://www.lsjunction.com/people/santanna.htm) *for almost two weeks. On March 6, the Texans were overrun and slaughtered by well over 2,000 Mexican troops. The resulting delay of Santa Anna's eastward movement gave other Texans more time to organize, both politically and militarily, and to ultimately defeat and capture Santa Anna at the* [*Battle of San Jacinto*](http://www.lsjunction.com/docs/events/jacinto.htm)*, fought April 21, 1836. The excerpt below was written by Travis soon after the Mexicans first appeared in the area around San Antonio. It is the stuff of legends for Texans and all Americans.*

Commandancy of the Alamo  
Bexar, Feby. 24th, 1836

To the People of Texas & all Americans in the World—

Fellow Citizens and Compatriots—

I am besieged by a thousand or more of the Mexicans under Santa Anna--I have sustained a continual Bombardment & cannonade for 24 hours & have not lost a man--The enemy has demanded a surrender at discretion, otherwise the garrison are to be put to the sword, if the fort is taken--I have answered the demand with a cannon shot, & our flag still waves proudly from the walls--I shall never surrender or retreat. Then, I call on you in the name of Liberty, of patriotism & everything dear to the American character, to come to our aid with all despatch--The enemy is receiving reinforcements daily & will no doubt increase to three or four thousand in four or five days. If this call is neglected, I am determined to sustain myself as long as possible & die like a soldier who never forgets what is due to his own honor & that of his country--Victory or Death.

William Barret Travis Lt. Col. comdt.

P.S. The Lord is on our side--When the enemy appeared in sight we had not three bushels of corn--We have since found in deserted houses 80 or 90 bushels, and got into the walls 20 or 30 head of Beeves—[Beef]

Travis

Send this to San Felipe by Express night & day--